NATIONAL DEFENSE UNIVERSITY

NATIONAL WAR COLLEGE

# THE BUSINESS OF THE MILITARY:

# FIGHTING AND WINNING THE NATION'S WARS

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The end of the Cold War has brought on a transformation in relations among states, the emergence of transnational entities exercising international influence, and the collapse and fragmentation of nation-states Considering the uncertainties in this period of transition in global relations, a broadly defined military strategy for protecting U S interests is understandable. However, the costs of a strategy that calls for employing U S military forces in a variety of missions, including non-combat missions, needs to be clearly recognized. The simple fact that U S military forces are capable of performing non-combat missions does not mean the military should be assigned those missions. Our national security strategy and military strategy must carefully consider the impact of using, developing or expanding military capabilities for missions remote from fighting and winning the nations wars Otherwise, we run the risk of eroding our capability to defeat emerging military powers over the next decades

The Institute for National Strategic Studies' (INSS) *Strategic Assessment 1995* notes that:

> "The transition [in global order] now under way is likely to take longer than most because there was no definitive, cataclysmic end to the old order The emerging order may not fully reveal itself until after the end of the next decade The fluid character of that order is a major reason why recent administrations in Washington have had such difficulties articulating a U S policy vision."[1]

As a consequence, this assessment predicts the military will be called upon to accomplish four fundamentally different missions

- o Hedging against the emergence in the next one to two decades of a military peer competitor from among the major powers
- o Preparing for regional conflicts with rogue states
- o Developing a cost effective response for quasi-police missions in order to meet transitional threats.

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[1] Editor Patrick Clawson. Strategic Assessment 1995. U.S. Security Challenges in Transition (Washington, DC National Defense University, 1995) p 1

o Engaging selectively in troubled states [2]

The U S. National Military Strategy, "A Strategy of Flexible and Selective Engagement," is consistent with the INSS assessment. It anticipates military missions ranging from fighting and winning the nation's wars to humanitarian operations. It envisions military forces employing leading edge technology to protect the U S against potential adversaries, including those that may use weapons of mass destruction The survival of our nation and winning its wars "remains [the military's] foremost responsibility and the prime consideration governing all our military activities the ultimate guarantor of our vital interests .. the fundamental reason that our Nation has raised and sustained its military forces."[3] The other two key components of the National Military Strategy, which follows our National Security Strategy, involve using military capabilities to **deter aggression and prevent conflict**, and for **peacetime engagement** Under peacetime engagement especially, U S military forces will be expected to meet requirements for non-combat operations such as peacekeeping, law enforcement, and humanitarian relief [4]

The National Military Strategy gives principles the U S. will follow under its strategy for employing military forces to fight and win our nation's wars.[5] But, it is silent on principles that will be followed for employing U S. forces in circumstances supporting the other two legs of the strategy - peacetime engagement and deter aggression and conflict prevention Apparently the Joint Chiefs of Staff (JCS) are hesitant or lack confidence in their ability to present principles for employing military forces in circumstances other than combat

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[2] Strategic Assessment 1995 p13

[3] U S National Military Strategy Joint Chiefs of Staff 1995 p ii

[4] U S National Military Strategy Joint Chiefs of Staff 1995 (Draft) Details of three components fo strategy peacetime engagement: deterrence and conflict prevention. and fighting and winning our nation's wars

[5] National Military Strategy p ii

In the 1995 version of *A National Security Strategy of Engagement and Enlargement* (National Security Strategy), the president gives several critical questions which will be considered in deciding when and how to employ military forces [6] "The decision on *whether* and *when* to use force is therefore dictated first and foremost by our national interest."[7] The National Security Strategy identifies three categories of national interest vital, important, and a third tier of primarily humanitarian interests.[8] Higher levels of interest are more likely to result in the use of military force. However, the use of our military forces will be selective and limited to those instances where "they are likely to be able to accomplish their objectives, the costs and risks of their employment are commensurate with the interests at stake, and other means have been tried and have failed to achieve our objectives "[9] The President acknowledges that, "Generally, the military is not the best tool to address humanitarian concerns "[10] Therefore, our National Security Strategy foresees limiting the use of the military for meeting our third tier national interests to special circumstances where military capabilities give the U.S a unique advantage, such as. "when a humanitarian catastrophe dwarfs the ability of civilian relief agencies to respond, when the need for relief is urgent and only the military has the ability to jump-start the longer term response to the disaster, when the response requires resources unique to the military; and when the risk to American troops is minimal."[11]

The discussion surrounding these intentions seems to reflect a more visible military influence in the policy discussion over the nine months since the 1994 National

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[6] A National Security Strategy of Engagement and Enlargement The White House, February 1995 p 13
[7] National Security Strategy 1995 p 12
[8] National Security Strategy 1995. p 12
[9] National Security Strategy 1995· p 12
[10] National Security Strategy 1995 p 12.
[11] National Security Strategy 1995 p 12

Security Strategy was published. For instance, three new questions in the 1995 version are traditionally considered near and dear to the military· "Is there a clearly defined, achievable mission? What are the potential costs - both human and financial - of the engagement? What is the environment of risk we are entering?"[12] Does all of this signal a new vision, a significant change in the *criteria* for when and how we will use military forces in pursuit of our national interests?

Not really The President's 1995 National Security Strategy, mostly incorporates the policy issues recently discussed in conjunction with questions regarding our national interests and the use of military force in situations such as Haiti, UN peace operations (Chapter 6 and 7), Bosnia, and Iraq The broader discussion in the National Security Strategy more clearly matches the practice of when and how we have recently used our military forces

The National Security Strategy also addresses our intention to routinely seek help from our friends and relevant international institutions when faced with shared concerns - "especially on those matters touching directly the interests of our allies, there should be a proportionate commitment "[13] In an acknowledgment of increasingly scarce resources, the strategy notes that "sharing responsibilities lessens everyone's load."[14] But, the trend is toward using U S military forces more frequently and as a tool to advance "important" and "humanitarian" interests which are largely non-combat activities.[15]

To be sure military forces have long been used for purposes identified as components of peacetime engagement and deterring aggression and preventing conflict, in addition to fighting our nations wars As Samuel Huntington notes, "Forces created for

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12 National Security Strategy 1995 p 13
13 National Security Strategy 1995 p 13
14 National Security Strategy 1995 p 13
15 See descriptions in INSS 1995 p 1-16 and Thomas C Linn, "The Cutting Edge of Unified Actions," Joint Forces Quarterly Winter 1993-94 34-39 for description of mission growth trends, types of missions and force composition

[combat] can be - and have been throughout history - employed in noncombat, nonmilitary uses . It is hard to think of a nonmilitary role without precedent for such roles are as American as apple pie."[16] Clearly there are circumstances when unique military capability and availability has made a difference in terms of saving thousands of lives, relieving suffering and providing comfort to people at home (Hurricane Andrew, earthquake relief, combating fires, assisting flood victims) and abroad (Beirut I, Somalia I, Rwanda)

But the military capabilities that enabled the successes - forces, training, equipping, maintaining, supporting, command and control - were developed for combat. "A military force is fundamentally antihumanitarian. its purpose is to kill people in the most efficient way possible "[17] Not quite the image one gets of military forces engaged in peace operations, law enforcement, disaster relief, etc But, it is the non-combat role that many national and military strategists believe will be emphasized by the U S military in the future

A speaker at the National War College predicted "The national interests both at home and abroad will increasing be in. surpressing violence and conflicts instead of deterring or waging wars; and projecting infrastructures into dangerous places for disaster recovery, humanitarian assistance or civil security "[18] As a result the speaker predicts the "military operational spectrum will be shifting toward. controlling more than massing forces, constructive as much as destructive operations; and working in civil as well as military venues "[19] If this view of the world is true, shouldn't the military be pursuing different resources and a different force structure?

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[16] Samuel P Huntington, "New Contingencies, Old Roles," Joint Forces Quarterly Autumn 1993 39-40
[17] Huntington, p 43
[18] Speaker, National War College 1995
[19] Speaker, National War College 1995

No, but that doesn't mean we won't continue to see changes. Refocusing military capabilities to address recurring operations of the type envisioned by the speaker cited above would require modifications to military infrastructure, capital equipment, training and planning. That's not the business the military should pursue. The business of the military is combat. The potential for combat missions to protect U S. interests remains very real and the focus required to dominate in combat has not changed.[20]

Today's U.S. military capabilities are built to prevail when faced with a threat of two major regional contingencies, nearly simultaneously Many have questioned the ability of the military to meet this commitment. I won't address the merits of the arguments on both sides of that issue But, there can be little doubt that the increasing military operations tempo for non-combat missions since the end of the Cold War comes at the expense of combat mission focus A future diversion or reorientation of resources from combat to non-combat missions will only further degrade combat readiness and combat modernization.

However, few doubt that the military will continue to be involved in non-combat missions. In situations when the implied conditions in the National Security Strategy have been met, it may make sense to use the military's special capabilities for non-combat missions First, we need to carefully consider all the costs Although we have traditionally used military forces for non-combat missions, "non-military roles have never been used to justify maintaining the Armed Forces "[21] Training, organizing, equipping, and sustaining our military should therefore continue to be based on combat requirements to support our nation's interests

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[20] One need only consider the Middle East, the proliferation of weapons of mass destruction, North & South Korea, India-Pakistan, Algeria, Greece-Macedonia, Iran, or Iraq to envision threats that might lead to U S combat engagements

[21] Huntington p 40 Hunitington notes that although it is perhaps right and proper to use military capabilities in non-combat roles, as we have throughout history, we have never used these incidental/collateral missions as justification for force levels or resources.

Our military force was sized, composed and organized with combat missions as its purpose. We are now faced with declining budget resources and a broader array of interests policymakers would like to act upon The War on Drugs, peacekeeping, disaster relief, humanitarian assistance are important concerns Are these and similar concerns best addressed by assigning those missions to the military?

The argument in favor using military forces for non-combat missions would point to unique capabilities and minimal incremental costs. The mission assigned is said to closely match what the military force might be called to do in combat. The case for drug enforcement is a good example A naval vessel participating as part of a counter-narcotics task force would likely need that patrol time to operate its equipment, and train and qualify its people anyway This argument is not without merit, but there's more to it than that

An Aegis class destroyer is a very expensive drug enforcement platform. And what of the command time devoted to becoming familiar with laws, operating procedures, area familiarization, etc.? If we didn't have an Aegis class destroyer, would we build one for the nation's counternarcotics mission? I think not. Consider the circumstances from an advocate of combat focus If you were facing a combat situation would you prefer to be assigned to, or protected by, a unit that has spent 30% - 50% of its time engaged in non-combat missions or a unit 90-100% dedicated to war fighting?

Unfortunately, the pressure for greater use of military forces in non-combat operations seems likely to grow in the future In a 1993 speech in the Senate, Senator Sam Nunn, Chairman of the Armed Services Committee stated.

> "While the Soviet threat is gone, at home we are still battling drugs, poverty, urban decay.. The military certainly cannot solve these problems But I am convinced that there is a proper and important role the Armed Forces can play in addressing these pressing issues. I believe we can reinvigorate the military's spectrum of capabilities to address such needs as deteriorating infrastructure, the lack of role models for tens of thousands if not millions of young people, limited training and education

> opportunities for the disadvantaged and serious health and nutrition problems facing many of our citizens, particularly our children "[22]

Senator Nunn's thoughts on *reinvigorating* the military capability are at least in part a response to frustrations with domestic problems and a lack of resources available to make a difference One might easily speculate on individual U S. states' desires to seek military assistance for a variety of problems such as natural disaster response, civil unrest or illegal immigration. But under a budget that most people assume will remain relatively constant in over the next five years, funds that are spent to reinvigorate or expand military capabilities for non-combat functions are funds not focused on maintaining military readiness and force modernization for combat functions.[23]

It is not clear that the American public desires a military with a lower level of readiness and less investment in future military capabilities [24] The public hasn't specifically addressed questions such as, "Do I want more counternarcotics enforcement, more peace operations, or more humanitarian assistance at a cost of less military combat capability?" Yet in a sense this question is being answered today in the budget process

> "A final deal on the supplemental defense appropriation measure remained stalled over Senate insistence that most of the $2.94 billion in its new proposal be offset by cuts in lower-priority programs within the Pentagon's own budget [the bill would] replenish Pentagon accounts drawn down by humanitarian and peacekeeping operations in Haiti, the Caribbean, Bosnia, South Korea, Somalia.[25]

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[22] Huntington, p 39

[23] Admittedly many items in the Defense Appropriation labelled pork or otherwise also don't contribute to combat mission performance. However, experience suggests this feature of the appropriation is likely to remain constant.

[24] Reaction to reports of reduced combat readiness of Army divisions in 1994 we met with calls for addition spending to prevent a reoccurence At the same time calls were made for additional spending for missle defense systems

[25] Dan Morgan, "Senate, House Narrow Defense Budget Gap· Negotiators Remain Divided Over Where to Find Funds to Replenish Pentagon Accounts," The Washington Post April 5, 1995 A4

The House version of the bill ($3 2 billion) retained $600 million and had some members arguing it was unfair to support these operations solely out of defense accounts But the Senate prevailed. "Virtually all of the spending is offset by the cuts in lower-priority defense and energy accounts."[26] In other words, the Pentagon absorbed the costs of teh noncombat missions In discussing the supplemental's passage, Rep C. W Bill Young (R-FL) stated, "If [the Clinton Administration] plans any more contingencies for humanitarian or peacekeeping missions they must check with Congress first Don't just bring us in at the end when it's time to pay the bill "[27]

However, it appears that when the military is used in non-combat missions, the cost of those missions will be paid by the Pentagon. And, headlines such as "US Drafts Plan for Influx of Illegal Immigrants Pentagon, Justice Department Discuss Holding Camps for Larger Flow From Mexico"[28] indicate non-combat missions will continue to grow and incremental costs will be paid by the Pentagon. The military also bares opportunity costs associated with the deviation from combat mission focus Considering *all* the costs, should the military forces be tasked with the broader non-combat functions supporting national interests, or is there a more effective and efficient way for the nation to pursue these goals?

How you prepare for war is not how you prepare for humanitarian assistance, law enforcement, and peacekeeping [29] A military commander prepares people to maximize

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[26] "Congress Sends Clinton Pentagon Funds Measure" The Washington Post, Associated Press story April 7, 1995 p A8

[27] "Congress Sends Clinton Pentagon Funds Measure"

[28] Bradley Graham and Pierre Thomas, "US Drafts Plan for Influx of Illegal Immigrants. Pentagon, Justice Department Discuss Holding Camps for Larger Flow From Mexico," The Washington Post April 8, 1995· A6

[29] Lecturer National War College Class of 1995 made this point clearly when noting that units prepared to a fine edge to go into combat in Haiti were scratched and replaced by other forces when the expected environment changed The speaker noted the difficulty in "throwing the switch in the back of the 18 year old soldiers head" combat to law enforcement especially in politically sensitive operations with little margin for error

the potential for unit and individual success in combat Should we have special forces or units to undertake various non-combat missions? Should we make all units equally capable of performing the broad range of these missions by increasing training and investing in infrastructure to support these missions? Are there other organizations where the mission fit is better and an existing capability could be built upon? For instance U.S. Customs, the Drug Enforcement Agency and Coast Guard for counternarcotics, various non-government organizations for nation building; privatize peacekeeping under the UN; and expand the Border Patrol and Immigration and Naturalization Service to address illegal immigration. All have positive and negative sides.

Unless one assumes an increase in national resources devoted to the non-combat operations currently assigned to the military, these missions will continue to be performed using existing resources Splitting resulting military forces to specialize in combat or non-combat missions reduces combat force strength and would likely require capital and infrastructure differences associated with specialization. Expanding training and preparations for non-combat missions within the existing force structure takes away from combat focus within the services and would likely require modifications to training and infrastructure to enable units to succeed in missions. For the military the effect or either of these two options is fewer forces focused on the combat mission. But, the military would preserve the size of the force in uniform.

An option that relieves the military of many non-combat mission by transferring resources from the pentagon would more clearly shape the debate over critical issues a smaller force size, a smaller budget, differently capabilities; and a new military strategy for military threats Needless to the say the battles within the government and military would be fierce

In uncertain times, strategists committed to maintaining military force structure may be hesitant push the issue of growth in non-combat mission assignment to the

military for fear of losing resources to competing interests such as counternarcotics, peacekeeping, and humanitarian assistance. Some may see the trend toward engaging in non-combat missions as an opportunity to preserve the force by developing a more diverse mission portfolio. This gets to the core values of the institution.

Does your vision of the U S military include an organization with strong law enforcement capabilities, strong peace operations capabilities, strong nation building, disaster relief and humanitarian assistance capabilities, *and* a major combat power? Or, does your vision hold a specialty niche as the world's foremost military combat power, with all of your energy focused toward that end? If the trend toward increasing non-combat mission assignments for military forces continues, we will likely investigate these issues, but the uncertainty of the global environment and status quo make it unlikely any changes will take place without a catalyzing event Such and event might include a failure for the military to meet public expectations in a combat mission, or failure to meet public expectations in a non-combat mission. We should not lose sight of the fact that today the military has supporters whose expectations are focused solely on combat mission performance The military also has supporters that may well argue for a lower level of resources were it not for the application of military capabilities to non-combat missions of interest to the nation.

Military leaders should continue to highlight the costs associated with using military forces as a tool of statecraft when the mission deviates from the military's combat role The National Security Strategy indicates the decision making process regarding the use of military forces will afford this opportunity The goal of highlighting this issue time and again is to reach consensus between the military commander and statesman, one of Clausewitz's principle ideas The more remote the missions are from combat the less "military" they are and the more difficult they are for combat commanders.

Military capabilities are finite. A failure to build and preserve our military capability to fight and win the nation's wars carries the ultimate cost. As a nation we need to be clear about the expectations we have for our military The military must be clear in assessing how those capabilities match the nation's expectations and how political decisions affect those capabilities If the nation consciously elects to commit more resources to other state interests at the expense of the current military strategy for fighting and winning the nation's wars, the military must change its strategy But the premiere goal of the military profession does not change - fight and win the nation's wars.